

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

IN RE: BUILDING CLOSURE UNDER THE EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY COVID-19 AND RELATED CORONAVIRUS General Order No. 20-4

GENERAL ORDER REGARDING COVID-19 VIRUS PUBLIC EMERGENCY—BUILDING CLOSURE

On March 13, 2020, this court issued General Order 20-2 in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States of America, and specifically in the State of Wisconsin and the Eastern District of Wisconsin. On March 16, 2020, the court issued General Order 20-3, implementing screening procedures for members of the public coming into to the building.

In the March 13, 2020 order, the court recognized that the Governor of the State of Wisconsin has declared a public health emergency in response to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and the Centers for Disease Control and other public health agencies have advised public and private entities to take precautions in order to reduce the spread of the virus. It stated that the court had considered guidance from a variety of sources including the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local public health authorities. The order also recognized the need to take measures to effectuate these goals, while also continuing to fulfill the court's mission and keep both its civil and criminal court operations functioning.

Today—March 23, 2020—Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers announced that tomorrow he will sign a “Safer at Home” order, requiring Wisconsin residents to stay at home unless they have “essential business” to attend to. Based on this and other available information, the court makes the following findings:

There is an overriding interest in protecting the health and safety of the building tenants and the public which would be prejudiced by keeping the building open to the general public.

The court has considered reasonable alternatives to this building closure order and has not been able to identify any that would effectuate the interest in protection of health and safety.

The court has crafted this order to be no broader than necessary to protect that interest.

The court finds that closing the building to the public will assist in complying with the governor’s “Safer-at-Home” order, reduce the number of individuals who come into contact with each other and with building staff and, the court hopes, reduce the likelihood of spread of COVID-19 infections.

The court emphasizes that the agencies in the Milwaukee courthouse, including the United States District Court, the United States Bankruptcy Court, the United States Attorney’s Office, the Wisconsin Federal Defender, the United States Pretrial Services and Probation Office and the United States Marshals Service, continue to operate. Judges will continue to hold hearings (either in person or telephonically) and issue orders. Prosecutors will continue

to conduct investigations and prosecute cases. Defenders will continue to represent clients. Probation officers will continue to supervise clients. Federal law enforcement agencies will continue their assigned duties.

Based on these findings, the court **ORDERS** the following:

Effective at 5:00 p.m. March 23, 2020 through and including at least May 1, 2020, the United States Courthouse at 517 East Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin will be temporarily closed to the public except as stated below. The court may continue this temporary closure based on public health guidance.

Parties wishing to file documents may do so by (a) filing them electronically via CM/ECF; (b) depositing them in the external drop box on the east side of the building (617 North Jackson Street); or (c) mailing them to either the United States District Court Clerk's Office at 517 East Wisconsin Avenue, Room 362, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202 or the United States Bankruptcy Court Clerk's Office at 517 East Wisconsin Avenue, Room 126, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202. No in-person deliveries of any kind may be made to a judge's chambers or to the clerk's office.

This General Order does not affect electronic filings through the court's CM/ECF system. Parties registered to file electronically may continue to do so.

This order does not affect the court's consideration of civil or criminal motions that the court can resolve without oral argument.

If a member of the public has a scheduled appointment or otherwise is required to appear at the courthouse but is denied entry, that party should proceed as follows:

- If you are represented by a lawyer, please contact your lawyer.
- If you are an attorney or a *pro se* litigant and you believe that you are scheduled to appear before a judge, please contact the clerk's office at 414-297-3372. **Please note:** The court has adjourned all in-person hearings and trials.
- If you are scheduled to meet with someone in the United States Attorney's Office, please call 414-297-1700.
- If you are scheduled to meet with someone in the Wisconsin Federal Defender's Office, please call 414-221-9900.
- If you are scheduled to meet with someone in the United States Pretrial Services and Probation Office, please call 414-297-1425, or contact your assigned supervising officer.
- If you need information from the United States District Court, please call 414-297-3372.
- If you need information from the United States Bankruptcy Court, please call 414-297-3291.

Check court websites for additional information:

United States District Court: <https://www.wied.uscourts.gov>

United States Bankruptcy Court: <https://www.wieb.uscourts.gov>

Dated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin this 23rd day of March, 2020.

BY THE COURT:



HON. PAMELA PEPPER
Chief United States District Court